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A Book of Verse

by

RICHARD HARRISON



Nineteen Hundred Fifteen



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by

RICHARD HARRISON

Wewoka, Oklahoma



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No. 1.

PARCHMENT, BRASS AND SILVER.

You always praised my verses,
And made light of your own:—
Mine was the clang of beaten brass,
Yours was the flute's soft tone.

You always said my verses
Than yours were greatly higher:—
Mine was the roar of a kettle-drum,
Yours was a well-strung lyre.

Parchment, brass and silver
Make an orchestra complete:—
The drum and the trombone may fill the ear,
But a flute is just as sweet!

ATTAINED.

That which I sought but never found for all my time and pains,
On musty page, in sleepy hall, in weary lecture room,
I found in daisy-meadows, and in the country lanes
Where trees of peach and apple had pitched their tents
of bloom.

The trust in God that neyer came, for all I heard it talked
Wrapped close in mysticism, clad in strange and complex
form,
Came, gentle as a summer breeze, as through the fields I walked
Where the mother-heart of nature was pulsing strong and
warm.

MASTERED.

Sweetheart, the weary miles are naught
For I can span them with my thought:
And there, beside the cottage fence,
Where roses spill their fond incense,
At sunset, sweet, I know you stand,
My latest missive in your hand.

JEWEL.

They say that she is only twelve years old
And get the Bible down to prove it, too:
I don't believe them. Look into her eyes,
And sure as fate you'll think just like I do.

Beneath her brows that gleam like burnished gold,
Deep-fringed with lashes never wet with tears,
Her eyes look out—the eyes of one who knows
The hidden secrets of a thousand years.

MYRA HAYES.

I got my books and fixed the fire,
And filled my pipe and fired her up;
All things arranged to heart's desire,
No taste of bitter in my cup.
And as I steeped myself in lore—
Shakesneare, Dumas, Lanier or Poe—
A baby's voice came through the door:
"Kiss me good-night before I go!"

The white-clad figure standing there,
The rosy face, so pure and sweet,
The dancing fire, the curving stair,
Brought out a picture so complete
That I have wished a thousand times
It could be drawn and kept for me
To carry with me in all climes,
Where e'er by chance I come to be.

The love she gave, so undeserved,
But true as could be, all the same,
Not one time from its channel swerved,
Nor flickered once its steady flame.
And though I fill a lowly place,
And dodge disaster all my days,
May Fortune show a smiling face
To loving little Myra Hayes!

DAPHNE.

Chin on hand and brow awrinkle,
Forehead knitted into a frown:—
And belied by the roguish twinkle
That frolics in your eyes so brown!

Frown now gone, and a smile beginning
Bright and warm as a summer sun:—
Prize, in faith, that were worth the winning—
Hard to keep when once it is won!

Think of the times we've had together,
Dream of the times we yet will have!—
Bright is the sun on the fragment heather—
Soft is the moon on the dimpled wave!

A bow taut-strung will lose its power,
Unused muscles will soon decay:—
Sweet, will you parley another hour?
Heart of my heart, let us love today!

A SHADOW OF A DREAM.

Our tent was pitched beside a mountain stream,
A dozen men were lying at their ease;
And like a song heard a dozing dream,
The wind sang softly in the tall pine trees.

A space apart from all the joyous throng,
I lay and mused, my coat beneath my head;
My eyes were dim, and in my heart a song,
A requiem for the days long past and dead.

A vision of the life that once I knew
Came back, forbidden, and my heart was wrung
By anguish, dear, as then I thought of you,
And joys we knew when Love and we were young.

LAUDAMIS REX.

I'll say no more for Edgar Poe,
Than one who for scant wages played,
And faintly, a flawed instrument
That fell while it was being made.

But is he king? We hold our breath,
And like an echo from the tomb
Rings out his song of hopeless death,
And we are trembling in the gloom.

Why linked he with the ghostly powers
His gifts of music and of rhyme,
When round him blew the sweetest flowers
That ever did in any clime?

When Nature in her coyness smiled,
And called to him from hill and lea,
Why sang he not of flower and child?
For few have sung so well as he.

So let us pause, ere we bestow
The honor-mead beyond recall;
The chilling of Auberian snow,
The rustling of a Legia's pall.

What think you of such themes as these?
(Can'st hear the Raven's rustling wing?)
If we embrace him our hearts freeze.
We cannot, will not hail him king.

ADRIFT.

I am sick of this crass endeavor,
This strife and killing pain,
And am now resolved to never
Take up the fight again;

To face the dangers many
That lurk at every turn,
With pleasures few if any—
(Ah, low the beacons burn!)

The mists are closing o'er me,
My strength is ebbing fast,
And the hope that long upbore me
Has faded out at last.
The bells are faintly calling
From the tower on the hill,
But the tides, swift and appalling,
May bear me as they will.

IN MEMORIAM.

If I could breathe the air he breathed,
If I could know the scenes he knew,
Perhaps the laurel crown that wreathed
His mighty brow might be mine, too.

In lower walks my pathway lies;
The great world never heard my name,
While his is written in the skies
In characters of astral flame.

Yes, he away from earth was caught
To other triumphs, as was meet;
And I, the wild one, the untaught—
I lay this tribute at his feet.

That if beyond the sun we meet,
In worlds where fraud and falsehood end,
That I the Master there may greet,
And he may turn and hail me "Friend."

Must I, who loved her as my very soul,
Stifle my love and shun the pulseless clay?
Must I my deep and racking grief control
While she is borne away?

Is there no pity in thy heart, O God?
Nor any mercy in thy nature stern?
Must every path by love and passion trod
End at the funeral urn?

THE IRISH FLAG.

A scrap of grass-green bunting a-flutter in the breeze,
Look closer, man, and you can see the harp without the
crown.

The thoughts that surge into my heart, what can he know of
these?

And that which rises in my throat and will not be choked
down!

He only sees the draggled scrap that heads the gay parade;
His soul is small, he cannot know just what those symbols
mean—

Of life and love and hate and death—of war's games grimly
played—

Of men who marched beneath that flag and wore the royal
green!

He cannot see across the miles of cold and tossing foam,
The Isle whose sons have left her but never they forget!
How with a smile they bowed to Fate and turned their steps
from home—

How driven through the world from her, their love is with
her yet.

They've raised a hundred flags to fame—their own they cannot
raise.

It cannot in the world of men be in the battle flown;
But this we know and strong men weep—take this as blame or
praise—

They've won every nation's battles, but they cannot win
their own!

NIGHT.

Ah, Night, Cruel Night! with a chain you've bound me;
Creeping on me unawares, flinging spells around me!
Wand'ring down a dusky path, full of pent emotion,
And my heart is full of thoughts as of drops the ocean.

Cruel Night, why dost thou haunt me?

Shameless Night, why dost thou taunt me?

Time of terror and despair, when no one seems to want me.

Cunning Night, Crafty Night! you I've been neglecting,
Well I knew your time was near and should have been expecting
When the gleam of Day is gone and candle-lights are mocking,
That the season drew apace when ghosts would be walking.

Dreamer Night, planning and plotting!

Schemer Night, stars you are blotting!

And a thousand ghostly dreams in your net you're knotting.

Gentle Night, Loving Night! take my hearty greeting;
Time of all the mystic times, when my love I'm meeting.
Meeting neath the festooned vine that sees but ne'er discloses
And the air is filled a-brim with perfume of roses!

Summer Night, haste not on your way!

Sweetheart Night, sweeter far than Day!

Do they call thee "Cruel Night"? heed not what they say!

THE WEEPING GODDESS.

Ah, mother, dry thy weeping eyes, give answer to our cry.
Will thy mighty sword keep to its sheath while little children
die?

Thy tears are kind, they show thy heart is tender still and
warm,

But mother, time for tears is past. Bare now thy mighty arm.

Dear mother, hush thy mighty sobs and heed thy children's call
Strike, and strike soon, O Mother, else no need to strike at all!
Our hearts are bruised—bruised but not crushed—our sorrow is
most deep.

But Goddess of the Sword and Scales, strike and no longer weep.

WHITE HYACINTHS.

Only four years have passed, ,
Faded and died,
Since I heard Lowery last,
You by my side.
Only four years have slipped,
Faded away; ,
Dark-eyed and rosy-lipped,
Whispered "You may."

I was a student then,
Reading the musty law, ,
But words of wisest men
Glimmered when you I saw.
You were a dancing spirite
Mixture of saint and elf:—
Loved me almost, not quite,—
Had the same fault myself.

Told we our common joys
Sorrows and cares we shared:
Unlike most girls and boys
,WE for the future cared.
I said "You are a prize,"
As we planned out some scheme,
Misty your dim-lit eyes—
Why did I only dream?

I then possessed your love,
Gained it and never knew—
Till earth's foundations move
How much I then loved you,
Dear, you will never know.
Oh, for you back once more:—
But the tides always flow
TO, never FROM that shore!

ABDULLAH'S GOD.

Prone in the dust, before the shrine,
Abdullah prayed to his god for a sign.
Choked with fear were his husky tones:
"Speak, thou maker and breaker of thrones!
"Speak, thou god whom the night-born owns!
"Long is the night and short the day;
"Scant is the time that we have to pray,
"And not when we would, but when we may.
"Show us one thing, O God, at least,
"That the end of man and the end of beast
"Are not the same. For better or worse
"Remove from our minds the horrible curse
"Of half-believing, and let us see
"In the dark that hides us, some light from thee!"

From the inner temple the answer came.
On the veil was written in words of flame,
In symbols of scorching and living fire:
"Presumptuous worm, dost thou desire
"With the eye of the flesh to gaze or look
"On the mystic page of Heaven's book?
"Creature of dust, would'st con the scroll
"That reads damnation to thy soul?
"Or with mundane eye, would'st dare to gaze
"On what to thee were the wildest maze?
"Away from my sight, lest I reveal
"A sight that would blood of thy heart congeal!
"By mercy of mine ye may away,
"But keep the guard of thy lips each day;
"Keep guard of thy lips, and school thy eye
"To look no more, or thou shalt die!
"Thou hast had thy answer. Return no more;
"And when thou shalt come to the iron door
"That opens inward, thou shalt go in;
"And when thou art purged of thy dross of sin
"Thou mayest see, but not till then."

WHY MURMUR YE?

Why murmur ye, my children? Why fret in discontent?

Has not the Good God blessed ye with blessings rich and
fair?

Why murmur ye, my children, with minds on mischief bent,
When for his loving kindness ye should give thanks in
prayer?

Have not your harvests prospered? Are not your vineyards
fair?

Do not your barns and storerooms bulge with the yellow
grain?

Then why waste time in fretting Why din the weary air
With cries of peevish anger, with speech rude and profane?

"Alas!" the people mutter, "such speech is old indeed:

"Oft have we heard that tale before, the same or much the
same:

"We gave it passive credence, and sadly now we share

"With you the curse that smites us, a nation's utter shame!

"Our backs are bowed by labor—ye live at languid ease;

"Your hearts are never troubled for what to you shall come.

"Of sinews strained and twisted, what do you know of these?

"Your hearts would faint within you to see our humble home!"

The backbone of a nation without a single clod

Of earth, no home to cling to with all its sacred ties.

Mocked by the pampered parasites, they have no friend but God:

Spurned by the ones they slave for, their hope is in the
skies.

THANK YOU.

I send a word of joy and cheer

To a girl I've never met;

I've never looked into your eyes,

Nor heard you speak, and yet

I know that across the weary miles

Of the intervening land,

I have reached the heart of another friend—

Thank God, you understand.

I've never seen you, little girl,

I do not know your name;

But this I know with all my heart—

You're a friend of mine the same.
And the years may come and fade and die,
And we may never meet;
But take my thanks from a thankful heart,
Your praise indeed was sweet.

ALONG THE RIVER.

Sullen and silent and cold they are,
Waiting the one command:
One word and alive and alert they are—
The guns on the Rio Grande.

Weary the days and months have passed,
But patiently still they wait:
Waiting till parley and doubt have passed—
Waiting the call of fate.

Statesmen thunder and fume and lie,
Gaining the fame they seek::
But when we weary of liar and lie—
The guns—it is theirs to speak!

THE BROKEN VASE.

For long times, dear, we wrought the vase,
Ay, years and years
And in its fragile beauty we could trace
Both smiles and tears;
And manly strength and girlish grace,
Their hopes and fears.

Alas, sweetheart, that we should break
The vase in twain!
Mar that which we can never make
Perfect again;
My heart at least will cringe and ache
With speechless pain.

And yet, sweetheart, through all these years
My love the same
Will burn through all my hopes and fears
Its ceaseless flame;
And in my heart are myriad tears—
Mine was the blame.

FOUR YEARS AGO.

You laughed when I was gloomy,
You frowned when I was gay,
And so, in this criss-cross fashion,
We whiled a year away.

You scoffed at my dearest fancies,
But when I mocked you cried;
And no matter what I attempted
You were never satisfied.

I took up the law to please you
And you gave me a chilling frown;
But were quick with your biting censure,
When I threw my law books down.

Then I built a wall about me,
Resolved to myself to stay;
But you sang beneath my window,
A song of the radiant May,

And the walls dissolved in vapor
To the magic song you gave;
And I knelt again (as you knew I would)
A cringing but willing slave!

THE ETERNAL QUESTION.

Outside was life, the realm of radiant May;
Her tracks were starred with daisies, and her breath
Filled all the air with sweetness on that day—
And inside, Mighty Death!

The laughing eyes that met the glance of mine
With looks of love and drew me near to her,
Were closed so gently. Even now they twine
Wreaths for her sepulcher.

Was it for this, O God, that I have loved?
Was it for this that I her true love won
And can she lie, so tranquil and unmoved,
More distant than the sun?

INTIMATIONS.

Sinuous dance of reckless love;
Truceless war of passionate hate,
Danced by the smoke that curls from my pipe,
Waged by the flames that roar in the grate,
Fields laid waste and towns afire;
Songs of troops that charge and cheer,
Fired by the sun at a winter eve,
Sung by the wind when the skies are clear.
Baseless fear and ruthless wrath,
Wanton daring that prudence mocks;
Reeds that cringe in the whirlwind's path,
Ripples that break on the ice-rimmed rocks.
Faith serene on its measureless heights;
Love that knows that love is best;
Gleam of stars on December nights,
Bird ahaste to its loved ones' nest.

SIDNEY LANIER.

From heart as pure as that which beat
Behind the shield of Galahad
Burst forth his songs, so pure and sweet,
So fresh and true, so faintly sad.
Large thoughts were in his soul, and yet
His songs were clear as April rain.
None read his life and can forget
His gallant fight with cruel pain;
Then read his songs—you cannot find
One murmur at the trend of things!
Though round his life the night-shade twined,
His soul was free, and on Faith's wings
Rose through the clouds that closed around
His mundane life, and far above
The crowd that trod the common ground,
He sought, and found God's boundless love.

A SONG OF EXILE.

The winds of winter whistle o'er the hill's snow covered crest
With a song of bitter meaning, and it touches deep and chill
All my hopes of growing better, and the fire within my breast

Warns me that their cold caresses mean for me the deepest ill.
But I know a softer climate, that is kissed by gentler winds,
And that land of summer sunshine has no deadly, killing
 snows,
For my heart is sick within me, for I long to be, my friends,
Where the hills are starred with myrtle, and the south wind
 gently blows.

Where the showers fall so softly that you scarcely give them
 heed.
Spilled from out the urn of nature, guided gently by God's
 hand;
Not a freezing, killing deluge that makes strong men writhe
 and bleed,
Suffering in somber silence 'till the glass has spilled the
 sand.
But I'm here and here forever, so I bear it like the rest
Of the ones who have to stay here, racked by never-ending
 pain,
But my heart is where the roses bloom, in lands that God has
 blest—
O my country—lost and lovely—I shall see her ne'er again!

MARIANNE.

Ah! see her rise, the land you dreamed was dead,
Upon whose lillies you had thrown the dust
As one whose soul was false to every trust,
And from whose hearths had Strength and Virtue fled.

Within your hearts, you cynics, laughed and said,
"Gone is the luster that Napoleon cast
"Upon her arms, the gateway of the past
"Is shut, and Honor bows her crested head!"

Chean talk of little souls! Behold her now!
The Sword of Jena from the scabbard drawn,
Is wielded by a strong determined hand.
The plumes that flew o'er Wagram shade her brow,
And bold into the red and furious dawn,
She strides, and strikes, the peer of any land!

SLUMBER SONG.

Be still, little one, be still;
Fret not with wailing cry.
Outside the night is chill,
But here at thy side am I.
Above the clouds that lower
Are shining the watchful stars;
And I sit here hour and hour,
My hand on thy cradle bars.

The Father watches us all,
And even so I watch thee;
Alert to thy faintest call,
Thy lightest move to see.
My breath I hold and catch,
From my eyes all sleep has fled;
And the long, long night I watch
By the side of thy tiny bed.

Thy father is far away,
Away from thee and me;
But sweet, by another day,
I hope his face to see.
For even now I know
He comes, though the cold wind blows,
Though the plains are heaped with snow;
His love will laugh at snows!

Be still, little one, and rest;
The day o'erspreads the sky;
Thy sunny head on my breast,
Thou art happy, and so am I;
For I hear his step at the door,
He comes with cheery call;
The long, long night is o'er,
And the Father watches all!

MUST I FORGIVE?

So he is dead! The cold heart colder grown;

The sneering lips forever sealed by him
Whose face is iron and whose heart is stone;
The eye of malice now is glazed and dim!

And he is gone! The one whose studied art
Threw in my path the wormwood and the gall,
With skill satanic struck my very heart,
Cast o'er my life a black and choking pall.

And you who prate of Christ's eternal love,
And you who know of this man's cruel way,
You try my bitter hatred to remove?
"Forgive the dead," to me you dare to say?

Forgive him? Yes when from the gates of Hell
There break in music, symphonies of love!
Forgive him? You who plead so wondrous well
The Rocky Mountains had as well try move!

AN OKLAHOMA SUNSET.

Purple shadows glide and lengthen
On the dusty way,
And in mauve and gold and crimson
Dies another day.
Far beyond the distant mountains,
In a molten sea,
Sinks the sun, and night has fallen
On the world and me.

Like the arrows of a giant
Stand the slender pines,
And the hills, so dull and prosy
When the daylight shines,
Now are filled with magic murmurs
All their being thru—
Here I watch the wond'rous paegent,
Far away from you!

BEYOND THE PALE.

Ah, you who tread the narrow path,
Who travel in the beaten way,
Who fear no dreadful aftermath,
And daily to your maker pray
That long unstained your lives may be,
Who worship neither Pan nor Baal,
You little know the lives that we
Lead, who are just beyond the pale.

The narrow path is beaten hard,
It holds no joy for such as we;
You labor for a scant reward,
And shudder at our revels free.
You dare not cross the fatal line
And rove among the purple lights,
Whose women, feasting, songs and wine
Steal from us half the summer nights.

Our lives are short,—as short as yours;
Back into dust our bodies fade,
But while this nightmare, life, endures
We face the issue, unafraid.
You whine and cant—we laugh aloud.
At our wild deeds your fancies fail.
You are the caste, we are the crowd,
For we are just beyond the pale.

“God does not love his erring sons?”
We take that for just what it's worth—
True or untrue, we are the ones
Who do the things in this old earth.
We lay the train and light the fire,
We wrest from waste a million farms,
And toward the goal of heart's desire
We send the world by force of arms.

On far frontiers we set the pace,
In draining swamp and raising wall;

Our belts we cinch, our boots we lace,
And ready stand for any call.
We span the torrent's raging flume;
We dam the river's brawling flood—
From ocean-edge to heather-bloom
Our way is marked by drops of blood.

In virgin wood, or hollow mine,
We swing the axe, or drive the drill.
You find us on the firing line
When rings the call for strength or skill:
From Cancer down to Capricorn
We shook hands with a thousand deaths,
That you we daily laugh to scorn
Might safer draw your timid breaths.

We swing the transit and the rod,
And check the land with nerves of wire.
Prometheus-like, we steal from God
And give to man the secret fire,
Before whose blaze the dark recedes
In widening circles, wider drawn—
The halo of our helpful deeds,
The pressage of a fuller dawn.

But whether long or short our days,
We keep our vigil all the same:
We crown the altar that we raise,
And with our lives we feed the flame.
And shall our labors count for naught?
Shall you who shirked, the palm receive?
That God who knows how well we fought,
Would treat us so we can't believe.

No! rather will he cast you down,
And spurn you with extreme disgust,
And crush you with his awful frown
As traitors to your given trust.
For He himself has suffered much
From such as you, so runs the tale,
And pity sure His heart will touch
For those who are beyond the pale!

NOT DEAD.

Tell me no more that he is dead,
 Speak no such word of him;
That sunk in dust that sunny head,
 The merry eye grown dim.
Say now no more that he has passed
 Into the shadows dim—
The words applied to numbers vast
 Shall not be said of him!

The friend of man upon the earth
 Is now the friend of God.
I knew his strong and sterling worth,
 I knew the paths he trod.
His manly strength, his wisdom proved,
 To no one was denied—
Say of him that he has removed,
 But never that he died.

TO ONE WHO KNOWS.

When I am gone, as even I must go,
To future bliss, or maybe future woe,
 Ah, friend of mine, remember me with song,
Joyous as brooks that in our Southland flow!

Put on no look of real or studied grief.
Keep on your way, secure in our belief;
 And when the birds sing in the cedars there,
Drop on the mound a single maple leaf.

Better 'twill be than any prosy prayer,
A prayer itself to Him whose love we share;
 And when it falls there from your kindly hand,
Friend of my heart! I'll know that you are there.

THE TAMPICO INCIDENT.

("...and the Flag has never been saluted.")

A truce in your war for lucre, a halt in your march for power!
Blow soft the trumpets and muffle the drums, for this is a trying
hour.

For a space desist from pleasure—for just a moment—then
You may dance and play, but not today. Hats off to our
martyred men!

Can you hear the stifled sobbing that steals into our cheers?
Ah, our words of praise and the songs we raise fall on unheed-
ing ears!

In vain you talk of their "glorious death." You may talk till the
crack of doom,

But one question is ever in our hearts and is this—THEY DIED
FOR WHOM?

Were they called by the voice of Duty, to offer up their lives?
To leave as a legacy orphaned babes and weeping widowed
wives?

The reasons that we are offered are too great for human ken;
But the question is here and will not die—WHO MURDERED
OUR MATCHLESS MEN?

"They died for Our Glorious Country," you say? I say you lie.
They were shot like dogs on a foreign soil, beneath an alien sky,
And the wrath of the pitiless ages, Hell-brewed for their portion
and share,

Shall greet the men—perhaps the man—who sent those sailors
there!

And today in the hearts of the people is a hurt that will not
cease:

You may TALK till Hell is a waste of snow—till horse-hair
grows on geese,

But we are damn tired of your jabber, and we send our hot
appeal—

WHO SENT OUR BOYS AWAY TO DIE BY FOREIGN SHOT
AND STEEL?

WITHERED ROSES.

What would I pay for perfect peace?
For a care-free heart and a quiet mind?
To turn from a life that has ebbed to the lees,
To the life that is past and left behind?

To the mystic time that I once knew,
When my heart awoke and my love began;
When first I thrilled at the thought of you,
And the touch of your lips made me a man.

'Twas the magic time of the infant year,
When the air was rife with the hint of May;
When the crocus gleamed like an angel's tear
From the moist young grass by the old driveway.

You were clad in the colors of Royal June,
With a flutter of white at neck and wrist.
A girl you were then, but a woman soon—
Ah, your eyes outshone the amethyst!

* * * *

Now the men whom I know, not one is true,
And the women I see, but few are fair,
And I would to God I could come to you,
In the mystic country over there!

LIFE.

Only a passing show,
Brief at the longest;
A prize that is sure to go
Not to the strongest.
Only a winding road,
Certain the maziest;
Only a palm bestowed
Sure on the laziest.

Sometimes a blessing sent
To ones who've no use for it;
Blood and bone element,
I have no truce for it!
Turmoil of mystery,

Maddest of mixtures,
Butcher of History—
Life and its fixtures.

MOTHER AND SON.

I was sick of the market's wrangle,
I was tired of the forum's drone,
And I left the crowded city,
For I fain would be alone.
And I walked toward the southward
Till I heard the mock-birds sing.
Ah, friend! talk not of beauty,
Have you seen Maywood in spring?

There I stepped into the shadows
And listened, laid at ease,
To the South Wind's gentle murmur,
And the song of the robber bees.
My eyes, I swear, were open,
You lie, who say "A dream";
And I saw a fairy figure,
On the brink of a little stream.

I gazed, but my eyes were dazzled,
And she turned and looked on me,
And my lips were dumb, but with my eyes
I asked who might she be.
And she slowly came toward me,
Delicate, dainty, fair,
With slender limbs and scarlet lips,
And roses in her hair.

And she came and stood beside me,
And looked into my eyes,
Saying, "You have my favor,
"You were born beneath my skies.
"What gift shall I give my wild one?"
And my blood burst into flame:
"Ah, spirit queen of the Woodland,
"What is your queenly name?"

And she laughed like a summer brooklet
A-ripple through the moss:
"Not know the Wind of the Southland?
"The Queen of the Southern Cross?
"Still staring? Ah, the stupid!"
And she stooped and kissed my brow.
"Child, must I linger longer?
"What is your answer now?"

And dreamily I answered,
"A lass with purple eyes?
Ah, no! the summer flowers fade fast,
"And a passion likewise dies.
"Fame? and the cheering thousands?
"Till another gains their grace'
"And you creep away unnoticed,
"To take an humble place?

"Not so! I ask for vigor
"And a place to use the same:
"A heart that is always youthful,
"No matter how goes the game.
"And in place of the noisy rabble
"I ask but a score of friends,
"And faith in the God of Nature
"To last 'till the chapter ends.

A PRAYER.

Give me the grace, O Father mine,
To walk the path laid out for me,
Nor shrink a moment's thousandth part,
With sickened brain and craven heart,
Back from the end so plain to see.
Give me the courage, Gracious God,
To fight a brave if losing fight;
To walk with firm, unfaltering tread,
Squired by the ghost of longings dead,
Straight to the portals of the night.

And when my task is ended here,
Where sermons cloy and sins beguile,
From my heart's depths, O God, I pray

When beckoned hence at last, I may
Walk to my prison with a smile.

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